

Iraq. Turkey has decided not to send troops to Iraq. Japan will not be sending personnel and it is providing less money for rebuilding than it once offered. Even South Korea has said that the lack of security in Iraq makes the idea of sending South Korean troops untenable. Where now is the joint effort that the President promised? How will the administration secure the assistance that is clearly needed in Iraq? The number of casualties is increasing at an alarming rate; when will it stop?

I believe that the administration must embrace a multilateral peace process to bring lasting peace to Iraq and to create an environment in which rebuilding can safely occur. A multilateral process is needed not only to develop and maintain peace within Iraq but also throughout the Middle East region.

Therefore, in addition to creating a plan in Iraq the President needs to create a plan to truly engage our allies. That is how the United States will be successful not just in the short term but for years to come. That is how we can responsibly follow up the inspiring words of His Excellency Prime Minister Allawi.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCOTTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EDWARDS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STRICKLAND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RYAN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ETHERIDGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk tonight about the Lee-Capuanos-Sanders discharge petition which is H.J. Res. 748. This resolution requests immediate consideration of H.R. 1102, which is the National Affordable Housing Construction Program, a trust fund, which targets funding and resources to States and localities to assist people in the most desperate need for affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, today, many of us recognize that we do live in two Americas, one for the wealthy and one for those who are struggling to just make ends meet. We have families living in dilapidated rental units, clutching to potentially meaningless section 8 vouchers, facing the harsh realities of high-cost housing or homelessness; but we have an opportunity here to make a real difference in the lives of people who need just a bit of our help, people, families, children, men and women.

We have an opportunity to help support families in their desire to build intergenerational wealth for the future. At a time of State budget crunches and shortfalls, we have an opportunity here to support our States who want to build safer, more affordable quality communities for our most vulnerable constituents.

Discharging H.R. 1102 under an open rule to the House floor would at least allow us to debate the need for more affordable housing and show where our national priorities really are. I know that our constituents want us to authorize a national affordable housing trust fund because it would construct 1.5 million affordable housing units over the next decades.

The Center For Community Change estimates that a national affordable housing trust fund would create 1.8 million, that is 1.8 million, new jobs. That is nearly \$50 billion in wages, good-paying jobs; and with our economy the way it is right now, with people on the brink, with so many layoffs, you cannot tell me that 1.8 million new jobs will not make a difference in the lives of millions of people.

Mr. Speaker, just think of it, if this Congress invested a mere 5, \$5.1 billion, that is \$5 billion, that is peanuts really, \$5 billion into affordable housing, of course instead of this never-ending war in Iraq, if we did this, I mean, the war in Iraq now is upwards of \$200 billion. If we just invested \$5 billion into this trust fund, we could commit at least \$37 to \$40 million to each State for housing, \$200 billion again, Mr. Speaker, for Iraq. We should not even worry about \$5 billion. We should be supporting this bill. We should move it forward in this House. \$5 billion, again as compared to \$200 billion, that is very minimal in terms of resources.

So this does not make any sense to me, why this bill has not come to the floor for a debate, why we do not have a national housing trust fund. Signing this discharge petition will help this tripartisan bill. We have over 215 Members with the gentleman from Vermont

(Mr. SANDERS), myself, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the gentleman from New York (Mr. CAPUANO), and many, many cosponsors on both sides of the aisle, and the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), tripartisan.

If, in fact, we discharge this petition, we would really overcome whatever political obstacles there are that have prevented this realistic, sensible and targeted, affordable housing legislation from coming before this Chamber.

It is my understanding that former Secretary Mel Martinez just said he did not want it to come to this body, and that is what has happened. 214 cosponsors, I do not think it makes sense for us to allow a former Secretary of HUD to dictate the legislation that comes to the body of this House. This program can and will make a considerable difference in the lives of our constituents.

Let me just tell my colleagues, over 5,000 organizations, unions, working men and women, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, individuals have endorsed this bill and are organizing grass-roots support to really call their Members and ask them for their support and why they are not supporting it, if they are not.

We recognize the cost and the hesitation that many Members had in regard to using the FHA surplus, which was the way the bill was initially written. So that is why, in order to garner additional bipartisan support, we have revised the funding mechanism and asked that the capable appropriators find the necessary \$5 billion wherever they deem appropriate. We have negotiated in good faith on this bill, and it makes no sense for us now to be here pushing this discharge petition as we are because of the fact that it has gone through committee and that it should be debated on this floor.

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It should be authorized because it will provide housing to all, which many of us feel, I know some may not believe this, but I believe that housing should be a basic human right, and because of that, it outweighs all of its cost.

So I encourage all Members to sign their names to the Lee-Sanders-Capuanos-Sanders discharge petition, because together, we can build affordable futures for families and thousands of children across this country. If we work together for passage of this bill, we can prevent thousands of our elderly and low-income families from choosing between food and shelter. And in many instances, that is what is going on. If we work together for passage of this bill, we can build safe havens through affordable supportive housing instead of homeless shelters for women fleeing domestic violence. If we work together for passage of this bill, we can build more opportunities for home ownership and mixed-income communities in rural and urban America.

Investing in H.J. Res. 748 means investing in a national affordable housing trust fund and providing a greater